

THOMAS
LORD LE
DESPENSER.

vite the king to a tournament at Oxford, seize his person, and liberate and proclaim king Richard. The king having failed to attend the proposed festivity, they, with five hundred horse, surprised Windsor castle; but finding that Henry (warned of his danger by Rutland, one of their number,) had quitted it for London, they were alarmed at the discovery of their plot, and hastened into the western counties. Despenser was seized at Bristol, and beheaded by the citizens, on the 16th of January 1399–1400.¹ His body was buried in the choir at Tewkesbury.²

By Constance of York he left one son, Richard, who died at the age of fourteen, without issue; and two daughters, Elizabeth and Isabel. The latter only attained maturity, and married, first, Richard Beauchamp earl of Worcester, and secondly, Richard Beauchamp earl of Warwick. The representatives of Thomas le Despenser are the same as those of Bartholomew lord Burghershe.³

ARMS.

Quarterly, Argent and Gules; in the second and third quarters a fret Or; over all a bend Sable.

LXXXII.

WILLIAM I. DUKE OF GUELDERS AND
JULIERS.

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THIS prince was the eldest son of William VI. duke of Juliers, by Mary second daughter and the last surviving child of Reynold I. duke of Guelders. On the decease of his maternal uncle, Reynold II, 4th December 1371, the succession to the duchy of Guelders was contested by two factions, the Hekerains and the Bronchorts; the former supporting the pretensions of John de Châtillon count of Blois, the third

¹ Leland's Itin. ed. 1769, vol. vi. p. 84.

² Monast. Ang. vol. i. p. 157^b.

³ *Antea*, p. 47.

husband of Mathilda the elder sister of Mary duchess of Juliers above-mentioned; and the latter those of the subject of this notice, then an infant of seven years. The civil war raged for a considerable period, but terminated, in 1379, favourably to the cause of the young prince of Juliers, who was at that date almost universally acknowledged as duke of Guelders, and, upon the death of his aunt, Mathilda, received his formal investiture on the 18th October 1383.¹ In the year following he led his troops into Prussia, to assist the Teutonic knights in quelling a revolt. During his absence, Guelders was invaded by the Brabanters: the duke hastened home; and, in 1386, declared war against Jane the widow of Wenceslaus king of the Romans and Bohemia, and duke of Brabant. That princess having called to her succour Philip the Hardy duke of Burgundy, under a promise to constitute him her heir, Philip obtained for her an alliance with France and the emperor: whereupon duke William solicited support from England, the ancient ally of his paternal house;² and, by a convention concluded at London, 10th July 1387, between the plenipotentiaries of Richard II. and himself, it was agreed that he should do homage to, and be of the retinue of the king of England in his wars against France, and furnish 500 men-at-arms, with knights and esquires, for the same wages as had been allowed to his grandfather by the late king.³ On the 12th of the same month he sent an esquire to Paris to defy Charles VI. king of France,⁴ a step productive of serious consequences; for the duke of Burgundy having, in 1388, induced the French monarch to march to the support of the duchess of Brabant, that monarch en-

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¹ Pontani Hist. Gelr. 1639, p. 321.

² His maternal grandfather, William V, marquis and afterwards duke of Juliers, was created, 7th May 1340, earl of Cambridge, with a grant of the town and castle and of a yearly rent of 1000*l.* in consideration of the services which he had rendered to king Edward III. in his continental wars. This duke married Jane of Hainault, sister of queen Philippa.

³ Rymer, vol. vii. p. 535.

⁴ The challenger was exposed to great hazard of his life on his journey; was arrested and thrown into prison at Tournay; but released by order of the duke of Burgundy, and suffered to fulfil his commission; after which the king presented him with a silver goblet of the weight of four marks, with fifty francs therein.—*Art de verifier les dates*, tom. iii. p. 180.

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tered, by the route of Champagne and Luxemburg, the territory of Juliers at the head of 100,000 men. The old duke of Juliers necessarily submitted; and by an act of the 22nd September of that year, in which his wife and their younger son joined, declared that the defiance had been made without their privity; that they intreated the king's pardon for it, and engaged, that if the duke of Guelders should not imitate their example, they would assist the king in making war against him.¹ The king thereupon advanced into Guelders, and obtained the like submission from duke William. In the same year he renewed the war in Prussia; and, returning from thence in 1390, he accompanied the duke of Bourbon on his expedition, at the instance of the Genoese, against the Moors in Africa, which was not wholly unsuccessful; as, although attended with great losses in its commencement, it ended with a treaty whereby the sovereign of Tunis engaged to liberate the Christian slaves, and to pay 10,000 bezants towards the expenses of the war.

The authorities are not agreed concerning the year in which the duke of Guelders visited England, was received magnificently by the Sovereign, and admitted into the Order of the Garter. He was elected to the sixth stall, on the Sovereign's side, after the death of Ralph lord Basset, which happened on the 10th May 1390. A MS. in the Cottonian library,² after relating the elevation of John of Gant to the dukedom of Aquitaine, (2nd March 1389-90,) mentions the arrival of the duke of Guelders, and his installation at Windsor. Leland, from another MS., fixes it to the month of May;³ but Walsingham refers the visit to the year 1391.⁴ Now, the African expedition having landed on that coast on 21st July 1390, it is possible that the duke of Guelders may have visited England towards the end of May preceding, on his way to join, in France, the duke of Bourbon; and Basset's death having occurred early in that month, the duke may then have been

¹ *Art de verifier les dates*, citing MSS. of Brienne, vol. xxxiv. pp. 201-208.

² Tiberius C. ix. 25^b.

³ Collect. vol. ii. p. 386.

⁴ Page 381. "Eo tempore venit

in Angliam dux Gelriae, cognatus regis, vir clarissimus, Angliæ unus in militia," &c. Another writer postpones the visit to the 15 Rich. II, May 1392.—*Leland's Collect. vol. ii. p. 406.*

elected in his room. We find that pensions were granted by letters patent on the 20th, to several Gueldrian knights;¹ and a wardrobe account of the same year contains a charge for a robe provided for the king after the feast of St. George, he having given his robe on that occasion to the duke of Guelders.²

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On the 13th December 1393 the duke inherited the duchy of Juliers by the death of his father, and was inaugurated in July following. In 1397 the war was renewed between him and the duchess of Brabant, and carried on, with various success, until the conclusion of peace in 1399. The duke and duchess of Guelders appear to have re-visited the court of Richard II. about this period, (and probably at the Christmas festivities which were celebrated, according to Stowe,³ in the beginning of that year, with "every day joustings and running at the tilt,") as robes of the Garter are stated to have been prepared for them against the feast of the Order in 1399.⁴

Our knight having, in 1401, concluded a treaty of alliance with the duke of Orleans against the duke of Burgundy, led an army into France; but returned to his states shortly afterwards and died on the 16th February 1401-2, at the age of thirty-eight; leaving no issue by Catherine his consort, (daughter of Albert duke of Holland,) who had previously been affianced to his uncle, Edward duke of Guelders.

ARMS.

Per pale Azure and Or, two lions combatant, the dexter of the Second, the sinister Sable.⁵

¹ Rymer, vol. vii. p. 672.

² lib. Cotom. p. 145, "eo quod dom. rex dedit gown suam de eadem liberatura dom. duci de Geler."

³ Page 319.

⁴ Anstis, *Introd.* p. 13.

⁵ Butkens, *Trophées de Brabant*, t. i. p. 530.